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NEEDED LEGISLATION

Normal Training for the Common School Teacher

MORE NORMAL SCHOOLS FOR KANSAS

Concordia's Claim

LB 1892
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2250 Ch. 907.0

The coming session of the Kansas Legislature will need the discriminating power of its Executive, and the most thoughtful consideration of its every member, that the various state Institutions which are clamoring for enormous appropriations in their jealous strife may not be discriminated against, and yet do justice to the great crowds of boys and girls which constitute the best product of our great state.

What I wish to show directly is that Kansas needs more Normal Schools and that, of all places in Kansas, Concordia, the County Seat of Cloud County, the Metropolis of the Republican Valley, has special claims for consideration in this line.

We wage no war against our present Institutions but we must frankly admit that the rank and file of our common school teachers do not receive the peculiar training which fits them especially for their work. In this respect we are far behind our sister states, all of which have from five to a dozen normal schools.

Kansas has about eleven thousand teachers in her public school, the average teaching life of which is about three years. This means that nearly four thousand new, untried, unskilled, young men and women are put in charge of one hundred thousand of our children to mold into lives of usefulness and patriotic citizenship.

The average age of our teachers is between twenty-one and twenty-two years. At the close of a three years experience, they prefer either the matrimonial condition or change their occupation to something more lucrative.

If all the graduates from the State University and our Normal Schools became teachers and entered the teaching rank upon graduation each year, they would hardly constitute ten per cent of the additional required annually. Should all of the high school graduates, and all the other graduates of our other institutions of learning in Kansas, become teachers, their augmentation would hardly be adequate to fill the depleted ranks in the teaching profession. The question which naturally suggests itself then is this—Where do they come from? My long experience of twenty years in the teaching profession and my study of the material which I have had in my work in over thirty Institutes in Kansas has enabled me to intelligently answer the question. They come from the common schools of Kansas, and they have barely succeeded in going through the text books which they go out the next year to explain to our boys and girls. In some of our counties over ninety-five percent of the teachers have never had any training except what is given them in a four weeks summer Institute.

What Superintendent Greenwood of Kansas City recently said in regard to some Education Wants of Missouri, can more strongly and fittingly be said of Kansas, as we have a much greater area, and I shall later show what startling effects distance has in attendance upon school.

The following is Superintendent Greenwood's argument when applied to Kansas:

No school system can be regarded as efficient, strong, and progressive in which one-fifth of the entire body is raw, untrained, undisciplined, and ignorant. Instead of having three State Normal Schools, Kansas ought to have at this time in full operation at least six. We need trained teachers and we need them badly. They are

needed in every state in the American Union and the only way to get them is to establish and maintain a system of normal schools, sufficient in number to supply the demand of all the public schools of the state. The normal schools are the only schools in which the history, the philosophy, the theory and the practice of education may be taught to any considerable number of young men and young women, and they are the only schools, par excellence, in which subjects are to be studied and expounded in the light of how they ought to be presented to minds more immature than those who are participating in the different branches of study.

College and University graduates in nearly every instance unless they had learned to teach before they entered upon their academic studies, have to be taught how to teach boys and girls in both the elementary and high school classes. They sometimes know the subject matter very well, but they do not know how to organize and how to present it, and worse still, most of them have such poor aim that they miss the capital points in a recitation or in a subject.

Until Kansas can turn out good enough trained graduates each year to fill the vacancies that occur in the teaching force of the State, our system of public schools will never be able to give value received in instruction for the money expended. All the most enlightened nations of the earth demand and require, and furthermore they provide, that thoroughly educated and technically trained teachers shall be employed, and only such as have been equipped, shall teach the children. It is the only way to prevent waste, dissipation of mental efforts, and extravagance in the expenditure of public money, not to speak of the deleterious effects upon the children whose ideas, thoughts, characters and conduct are to be shaped into proper ideals concerning all the vital questions of life's duties, its relations and responsibilities."

EMPORIA'S ENROLLMENT. From the last roster of Students at Emporia, our only really State Normal as the other two schools are looked upon merely as branches, the following startling statistics are to be found: Total Enrollment, two thousand one hundred fifty-six. From Lyon County, eight hundred six. For all the rest of the state one thousand three hundred fifty, and of this one thousand three hundred and fifty, nearly eight hundred were enrolled in the summer school of only eight weeks, leaving only five hundred fifty students outside of Lyon County that attend during the regular school year. Of these the greater part came from the counties immediately bordering Lyon. Chase, nineteen; Morris, forty-seven; Greenwood, thirty-nine; Wabaunsee, thirty-seven; Osage, twenty-nine; Coffey, forty-seven.

Let us compare with these six Counties, six Counties equally as good in Northern Kansas, and with an equal teaching force. Rooks five, Osborne three, Mitchell fourteen, Cloud twelve, Lincoln two, Ottawa five. These six all bordering counties, found in one mass in North Central Kansas sent to Emporia a total of forty-one. A less number than either Morris or Coffey sent to Emporia.

That the school at Emporia is a good thing for Lyon and its surrounding Counties no one will question. But

are we not a part of the great school system of Kansas? Do not the children of Northern Kansas deserve just as well trained teachers and at the State's expense as the more favored position? Do we not think just as much of our children as they do of theirs?

The students who take advantage of Normal training live near the institution. At Pittsburg after nine years, 400 of the 723 students are from Crawford County. Think of it over 54 per cent from one county! Even at Hays 43 per cent of the students enrolled are from Ellis County, and this in a region where the Normal is the only opportunity for higher culture and training.

A normal school is not a university in any sense of the word. The course should be so prepared that it can take common school graduates and in from two to four years give them especial training in the subjects they are to teach. The equipment is not expensive and the betterment of our schools is not from concentration but from extension. Even Universities in their great work, recognize the necessity of extension work and are putting in courses in many of our cities. Let the State carry this work to the people and then, and then only, can we point with pride because of the results it is giving to the State.

AGRICULTURE IN THE SCHOOLS. Kansas has constantly been adding to the common school curriculum. Following the passing of the Prohibitory Amendment, we found it necessary to require the teaching of physiology and hygiene, with emphasis upon the effects of alcohol, narcotics, and stimulants upon the body. A little later our State Pride, and realizing that we had a State with a glorious history, we added Kansas History to the Course of Study and now getting down to the common sense of things, entering a practical era, and knowing that Agriculture is the chief business of Kansas, we have taken up the study of Agriculture in our schools, with the view of keeping the boys and girls upon the farm, of making farm life more interesting, more practical and more valuable. Our State Superintendent, Mr. Fairchild is pushing this question, his work is being recognized and in many of our Normal Institutes the question received especial attention last summer. The State Horticultural Society last Winter adopted the following resolutions: "That we appreciate the attitude of Hon. E. T. Fairchild, Superintendent of Public Instruction, on the question of Horticulture and Agriculture in our Public Schools, and accord him our hearty support and assistance whenever possible."

Fads have no place in our school courses, our teachers do not know either the how or the what of agriculture. It is worse than the case of the blind leading the blind.

CONCORDIA'S CLAIMS. That I may not weary you longer with the need of a Normal School Proposition, I wish to show how Concordia meets every requirement and can answer and supply every demand.

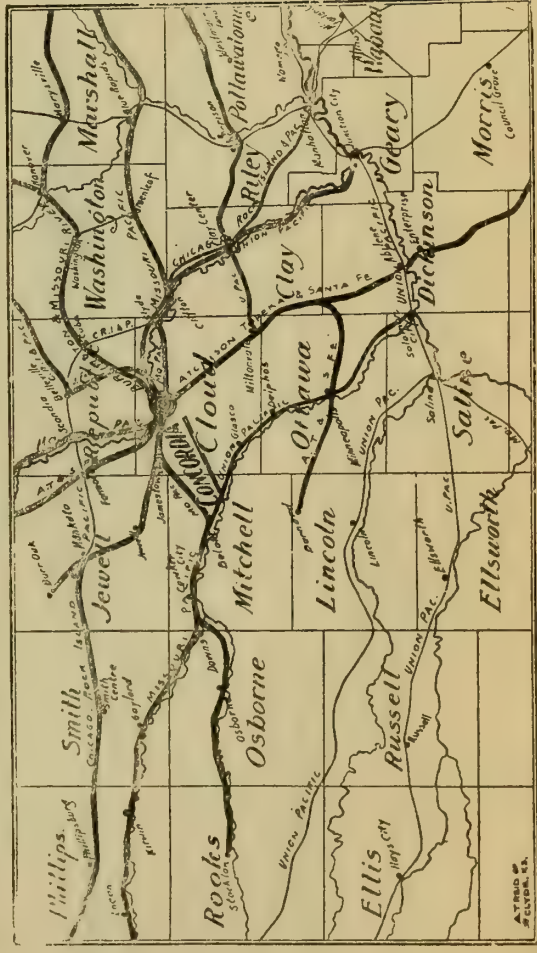
To begin with we have a successful private institution doing the exact work that we wish the state to help us do, and do free for our boys and girls. The Concordia Normal & Business College has just entered upon its third year and already thirty-three and one-third per cent of the common school teachers of Cloud County have

been students of our Institution. Never in the history of the County have we had so many first grade and professional teachers which with hardly an exception have been students of our home college.

Our enrollment last year was over two hundred, nearly all from Cloud and its bordering counties, and today we have more than one-fourth in actual attendance of what they have at Emporia, yet we are requiring a tuition fee of forty dollars a year.

The citizens of Concordia raised twenty thousand dollars, and put every cent of it into land, building, and equipment. Today that same property is easily worth thirty thousand dollars. We have a school equipped, organized, and doing a great work. We have boarding clubs and rooming houses. We have a small library and an unsurpassed athletic field. We need more [REDACTED]s, more teachers, and free tuition.

That we are accessible from all parts of North Kansas the accompanying map clearly demonstrates.



Four railroads enter Concordia, The Missouri Pacific, the Burlington & Missouri, the Union Pacific, and the Santa Fe, and we are the only city west of the river that has the equivalent of a belt line in the great Rock Island

Route on the east, north and west of us. It crosses our Missouri Pacific at Clyde, our Union Pacific at Belleville, our Prosser at Scandia, our Santa Fe at Courtland, and our Burr Oak Branch at Mankato, and our Burlington to & Missouri at Cuba. Our railroads run out like the spokes from the hub of a wheel, and we are just the right distance from Nebraska, our railroads being from forty to fifty miles from the State Line.

That we are prepared to give the teachers the exact training along agricultural lines I can fully show. We are in the center of the most diversified farming in Kansas. Upon the very borders of the wheat and corn belts. To the south is the greatest wheat district of the world and the northern tier of counties is our greatest corn area. Jewell County first in corn, first in alfalfa, first in hogs, first in honey, is only fifteen miles distant. We point with pride to the three most successful gardeners in Kansas, and they all live almost within the very shadow of the College.

The Concordia Normal & Business College today has the best and strongest course in agriculture for teachers in Kansas.

We will give to the State of Kansas this valuable school for twenty thousand dollars but would ask an additional eighty thousand for building and running expenses for the next two years.

Our demands are modest when compared with those of the older and more thoroughly equipped institutions, which will benefit but few of us in North Central Kansas as the Statistics show.

In asking for a new school at Concordia our demands are just. It is only a square deal. Every one of the eastern states has kept increasing the number of its Normal Schools. It is not for us but for our children that we seek your assistance and earnestly ask your recommendation and strong support in this matter.

Did you ever stop to think that the two northern tiers of counties in Kansas, one-fourth of the state has only three institutions, the Orphans Home at Atchison, the Girl's Industrial School at Beloit, and the Agricultural College at Manhattan, and the last named is far south of the north one-fourth of Kansas, yet we are held for one-fourth of the State's taxes as we average one-fourth of Kansas in wealth.

Experience has taught the great eastern states that the only way to give the common school teacher training is to scatter well her Normal School. Pennsylvania has a dozen, Massachusetts an equal number, Minnesota and Wisconsin each from six to eight. Will these states abandon any of them? No.

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